

THE OLDTIMER

Volume 32, Number 2

The Newsletter of the Josephine County Historical Society

June, 1997

We have a date

JUNE

■ **June 21.** Wine & History bus tour of Applegate and Cave Junction wineries. See page 6 for details.

JULY

■ **July 27.** 2:30 p.m. is when the Wilderville Pie and Ice Cream Social begins at the Methodist Church. The Oregon Chautauqua Program "Folk Songs & Fiddle Tunes — Where'd You Come From, Where'd You Go" explores musical folk culture from rural America. Don't miss it.

■ **July 25.** NEW! A story telling afternoon for all ages begins at 6 p.m. in front of the barn on the beautiful Schmidt House grounds with tall tale swappin', music and refreshments. Call Dorae Bowen, the organizer, for details at 862-2394.

AUGUST

■ **August 2.** Klamath Falls bus tour led by Mike Oaks. See page 6 for details.

■ **August 12-16.** Josephine County Fair — Stop by our booth and say hello. Or better yet, call and sign up to man the booth if you can spare a few hours. Claudette Pruitt, 479-8963, is taking volunteers.

For information on any of these events call 479-7827.

Many donations have insured that...

Library is ready to move on over

By Edith Decker

Day by day the project is closer and closer to completion.

"Donations have happened just when we needed them to," says Rose Scott of the efforts to finish the new research library and move the collections and offices into it.

Outside, passersby may have noticed the paint job, the new porch and the asphalt parking area.

Inside, work has included new electrical, plumbing, carpentry and dry wall (We moved some walls around.) plus flooring, painting, insulation and heating.

The community has banded together to help the society with this goal:

Donations of labor came from the Sawdusters group, Scaglioni and Sons and David Fogelquist to insulate and sheetrock. Barry Peterson did saw cutting and Chris Smith laid the linoleum donated by Colonial Decorators and the used carpeting, donated by SOFCU.

Also Roy Stoll, Heimos Plumbing, West Main Rentals, Grants Pass Sanitation and Southern Oregon Transfer and Storage made donations of time or supplies. Copeland and



Bob Lane and Tom Bristol have been the main handymen who've spent hours on all the important things we needed.

Riverside paved the parking lot.

Meanwhile, nearly every day around noon, volunteers Bob Lane and Tom Bristol are taking a break for lunch on the front porch after a hard morning of doing everything from measuring carpet to crawling under the house to frosting bathroom window panes.

What's left?

An air conditioning system and the double-pane, tinted windows that will protect the collection from sunlight. Scott estimates that we need to raise \$2,500 to cover both projects.

To expedite the move, the second floor of the house, earmarked for storage from the

See MOVE, page 2

Inside:

Letters to the editor	2
In the community	3
History at the center	4-5
Bus tour info.	6
From the bookshop	7
Barn Again wrap-up	8

Letters to the editor

Dear Josephine County Historical Society Board of Directors:

It is our pleasure to be involved in Barn Again! And thank you for enlarging the old pictures of Grants Pass. They will look great in the Board Room.

Dwight Ellis

Grants Pass Chamber of Commerce

Marilyn, Rose and everyone:

On behalf of the City of Grants Pass, thank you for a beautiful silver round you presented to us at our last council meeting. We look forward to working closely with the historical society for the benefit of us all.

Mayor Gordon Anderson

Dear Roger Ramsey:

We are pleased to take this opportunity to commend the Josephine County Historical Society for a job well done! The "Barn Again" Smithsonian Exhibit is a great success. We appreciate the amount of time and effort which was put into organizing this impressive exhibit. It will be a big boost to the community.

Congratulations and keep up the good work.
County Commissioners Fred Borngasser, Jim Brock and Harold Haugen

Dear Ms. Scott:

Thank you for taking us on the tour of the old Schmidt House and the barn exhibit. We really enjoyed seeing how kids and adults lived 100 years ago.

Sincerely Erin and Sean Bayliss
touring with homeschoolers in TEACH group

Barn adorns society note cards

Pat Bristol, who's done so much volunteer work with her pencil and paintbrush for the society in the last two years, has once again donated her talents.

Pat's drawing of a somewhat dilapidated barn (with loads of character) plus two other sketches — of a bucket and an old hay cart

— adorn note cards printed for the society to sell during Barn Again.

Of course we have plenty left and they make great gifts. Or use them yourself to keep in touch with friends and relatives over the summer.

Packs of 10 are available at the book shop for \$5.

Move continued from page 1

beginning, but still needing work, has been left alone. It will constitute a second phase of the project once everything's in place on the first floor.

"Then, once we're moved, we can work on the upper floor," Scott notes.

Meanwhile, the way is clearing for the big move.

The collection was stored in the home's back rooms and in the

Schmidt House — where office space is made wherever it can be found — in order to open the barn up for the "Barn Again" exhibit.

The barn is once again empty and the board is discussing different plans for it. Meanwhile, it provides a meeting place for members and the community.

"It will provide a place for us to have events here at the society," Scott says.

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508 S.W. Fifth St., Grants Pass, OR 97526.
(541) 479-7827

❖
Annual membership dues are \$15 and include a subscription.
❖

Edith Decker — editor

Lee Ann Tardieu — publishing committee chairman
❖

The circulation of The Oldtimer is 650. It is published quarterly.
The publishing committee also produces an annual historical publication, mailed free of charge to all members of the society.

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In the community

■ **HELLO, YOU'RE ON THE AIR.** Marilyn Luttrell and Dorae Bowen sat in with Carl Wilson at KAJO for an interview early in May to promote Barn Again, the barn dance and chat about the new library. In about 10 years Marilyn's voice will be heard by spacecraft outside the galaxy saying: "Hi Carl!"

■ **CHECKING OUT THE NEW CRATERIAN THEATRE.** Representatives of most arts and cultural organizations in the valley — including our own Dorae Bowen and Pat Bristol — met for a tour of the newly refurbished Ginger Rogers Craterian Theatre in Medford and some round-table discussions about the arts in the community. "We assessed where we are now, what we see as necessary and finally where we hope to develop and the impact on our quality of life over the next 25 years," says Bowen of the meeting.

■ **BLIND GEORGE SIGHTINGS.** Our own version of Elvis, the great town character Blind George keeps popping up from beyond the pale — thanks to John Cova, world-renowned Blind George Impersonator. John attended the Retired Teachers Association on April 14 and gave a 30-minute review of Blind George's life and business with about 35 teachers enjoying the show. He was introduced by Grace Blanchard, who also presented a donation from the association to the society. The Caveman Kiwanis were next on the list on May 7. "When I asked for the hands of anyone who had been in Blind George's Newstand, everyone held a hand up. Of course I couldn't see the hands — but you know everyone has been there," said John/George. If a group you belong to might be interested in this entertaining bit of history, call the society. In the meantime, Blind George has left the building.

■ **MIDDLE SCHOOLERS IN A MINE WITH MCLANE.** Larry McLane touring a mine with 30 students from North Middle School. Quite a mental picture, isn't it? Larry showed the class the ins and outs of Golden and the Spotted Fawn Mine above Golden on Coyote Creek on

March 17. And they all made it back — including Larry.

■ **OAKS MAKES HIS MARKERS.** Mike Oaks, the Historic Sites Chairman, has been busy with two markers this spring. His pet project, a Williamsburg marker with the story of the old mining town on a redwood sign, was recently completed. He showed it off at the society before taking it to be stored until later in the summer when it can be mounted and a big unveiling is scheduled. Also, Mike talked with the Oregon Department of Transportation about the roadside pull-off near the old humped bridge on Highway 238. Now that the highway has been rerouted, the area has a historical marker and pull-off area. And the marker has our name on it thanks to Mike's efforts.

■ **ALL DRESSED UP FOR AMAZING MAY.** The usual gang of G Street actors were back in costume for a tour in conjunction with Amazing May. Mike Oaks, Claudette Pruitt, John Cova, Judy and Jean Boling all let people in on the real history of G Street during the May 17 tour.

■ **TARDIEU ON THE TUBE.** Lee Ann Tardieu has been interviewed each month on our cable access Channel 42 about the society's goings on. The channel is normally a blue screen, but local programming is seen more and more. Grant Tressel was the interviewer for this great service. Lee Ann talked about the Barn Again exhibit in March and April as well as the wonderful grounds around the Schmidt House in April and May.

■ **RAMSEY DUSTS OFF ARTIFACTS FOR RIVERSIDE.** Roger Ramsey got a big introduction from his hostess as he presented a program at Riverside School. Of course the introduction was made by his kid, Kierra, so it's no surprise. Mrs. McCaan and Mrs. Johnson's classes were treated to a talk about the county's early days, a look at some cool old photos and a big pass-around of about 25 artifacts from Roger's collection on March 19. Roger just can't get too old for show and tell.

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History at the center

Strange things happen when people eat

By Percy Wetherbee

I've gathered some unusual restaurant happenings — stories I've heard from friends and relatives. You might not want to read this on a full stomach.

In 1908-09, my father, Guy Wetherbee, was driving a steam tractor for a threshing crew at Klamath Falls. When he ordered breakfast at a restaurant, they brought him a slice of bread that was covered with hair. When the cook had shaved that morning with his straight razor in the kitchen, he had wiped it on that slice of bread.

My brother Frank was visiting old friends in Lakeview when he and a friend, Harold Schultz, went in a restaurant and ordered a meal. When they brought the soup, Frank called Harold's attention to a potato bug that

was swimming in one of the bowls. They didn't stay for the second course.

Back when logging was done with horses, a logger from Wilderville was working over in the Klamath country. While having a meal in a restaurant, he pinched a waitress who came by his table carrying a pan of hot gravy. She turned it upside down over his head. No word on whether it cured him.

My sister, Lyle Felkner, writes that between the years 1947 and 1949 when her husband, Jack Felkner, was stationed at the Navy Air Base outside Jacksonville, Florida, there were only three Grade A restaurants in that city, which was considerably larger than Portland. One Sunday they stopped for lunch. When seated they looked directly into the kitchen where a six-foot tall Jamaican woman, smoking a long black cigar, was cooking.

About then the waitress brought the salads. As Lyle started to eat hers, her

husband jumped up from the table and headed for the door. Realizing it must have been the food, she glanced at his salad where an added attraction was the raw tail section of a chicken adorning the side of his plate.

My sister, Nancy Rand, was working in a restaurant in Mojave, Calif., during World War II, while her husband was in the Marines there. Catsup was in short supply, so she was told not to give it for use on hamburgers.

As luck would have it, she soon was waiting on an inebriated Marine who insisted on catsup. When she wouldn't give it to him, he threatened to kill her and went over the counter after her. She grabbed the first handy bottle to beam him over the head. And when the bottle broke — it was catsup.

A side note: One of the MPs who came for the wounded Marine was George Temple, Shirley's brother.

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W.A. (AL) TILLERY

History at the center

Pioneer fashion and folly

These notes on women's fashion and hygiene offer one thought: Thank goodness it's not like this anymore.

■ The Mother Hubbard dress style came West with its yards and yards of swishing skirts hiding any hourglass shape a lady might have. Men hated it. The city fathers of Pendleton decided that all that loose material was scaring horses and causing accidents — especially when the wind blew. So in 1885 they passed an ordinance outlawing Mother Hubbards unless worn tightly belted. Notices were posted that women caught in such attire would be heavily fined.

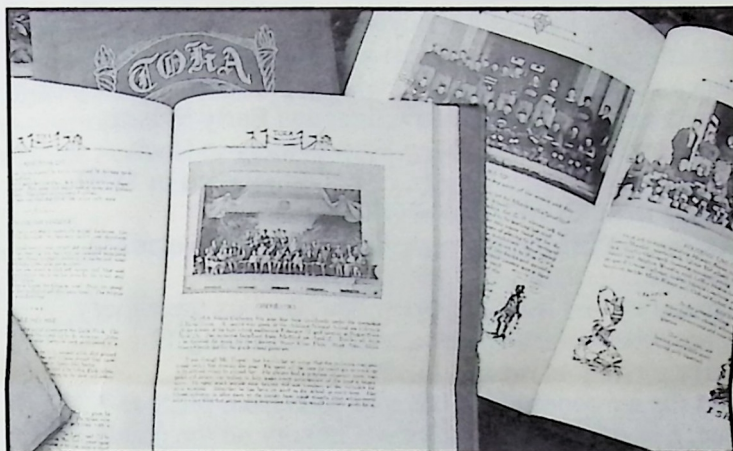
■ Shampoo was made by mixing castor oil, whiskey and lavender. No wonder they couldn't do a thing with it.

■ Dark hair was considered slightly immoral for older women. But it was fine to conceal premature grey hair by touching it up with sage tea.

■ Meanwhile, particularly before a dance, long locks would be curled on a slate pencil heated over a lamp chimney.

■ And to avoid body odor, one maven suggested two tablespoons of spirits of ammonia in a basin of water for a good wash. "And your skin will be clean, fresh and sweet." (Well, clean, anyway.)

From the collection



Got old yearbooks?

"From the collection." features interesting items in the care of the society. Some may be recent acquisitions or some may be long held by the society.

This set of Tokas from Grants Pass was donated to the society recently. They include great photos and an idea of what high school life was like for another generation.

Old yearbooks (and even not-so-old yearbooks) provide great information to researchers and we love to have them when they're from our local schools.

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Two bus tours kick off summer fun at society

A winery tour

On June 21, the bus will load beginning at 9:30 a.m. for an all-day tour of three local wineries — with a talk on the history of the areas they're in along the way.

The cost is \$25 per person and includes catered lunch. The bus returns to the Schmidt House about 5:30 p.m.

First stop is the Bridgeview Vineyards in the Illinois Valley for a tour, tasting and lunch, which will be catered by Taylor Sausage. This 74-acre vineyard is planted in European style and produces award-winning Pinot Noir, Merlot, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Gewurztraminer and their original Blue Moon Riesling.

Next stop is the Foris Vineyards Winery for a tour and tasting. The most southern winery in Oregon, Foris offers a spectacular vista. The winery produces Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Gewurztraminer and Early Muscat.

The final stop is the Valley View Winery in Ruch. The Northwest's first winery, it was established in 1850 by Peter Britt. In 1971 the Wisnovsky family rediscovered this unique region and planted 26 acres in the Applegate Valley in Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Merlot grapes. For 20 years the winery has produced award-winning bottles, including 12 international gold medals in 1993 alone.

As the air-conditioned bus tour rolls from place to place, Mike Oaks will offer some history on the points of interest.

SOUTHERN OREGON WINERY BUS TOUR? SIGN ME UP!

Mail this form to Josephine County Historical Society, 508 S.W. Fifth St., Grants Pass, OR 97526.

Please reserve ___ place(s) for the wine history bus tour on June 21.

Enclosed is my check for \$___. (Cost is \$25 per person, and includes catered lunch)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

A Klamath Falls tour

On Aug. 2, Mike Oaks will be in the saddle once again leading a group to Klamath Falls.

The tour leaves the Schmidt House at 9 a.m. and returns about 5:30 p.m.

The lunch stop at Klamath Falls is an up-to-you deal — bag it or buy it.

The itinerary includes the Applegate Trail markers and some commentary about the trail. Once the group arrives in Klamath Falls there's a tour through the Klamath County Museum, which features sections on American Indian history and pioneer settlement in the county.

The county museum also operates the Baldwin Hotel, which you have time to stop at. (Admission is an additional charge.) The hotel was built in 1906 and is a state and national historic landmark.

Just to prove that timing is everything, this particular weekend there'll be a street fair with food, music and a working trolley on the agenda in Klamath Falls. (Actually, they're just sooooo happy to see us.)

We've reserved the extra-comfy bus for this trip since it's a longish one — with air conditioning and reclining seats.

The cost for this trip is \$25.

Sign up early to be sure to have a seat for the tour.

HISTORIC KLAMATH FALLS BUS TOUR? SIGN ME UP!

Mail this form to Josephine County Historical Society, 508 S.W. Fifth St., Grants Pass, OR 97526.

Please reserve ___ place(s) for the Klamath Falls bus tour on August 2.

Enclosed is my check for \$___. (Cost is \$25 per person)

Name: _____

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Words from the bookshop

● Connie Floyd's history of Jerome Prairie School a good resource

By Dorothy Francis

Connie I. Floyd gives the readers of "The Jerome Prairie School History from 1871 to 1986" a wonderful overview of that educational center that has been in Josephine County since 1871.

Maybe not right at 2555 Walnut Avenue, as it is now, but close by. The school was a center for the residents of the Jerome Prairie community.

Floyd found the earliest date, 1871, for the school's establishment while reading the Rev. T.L. Jones' book "From Gold Mine to the Pulpit" where he writes: "At a place called Jerome Prairie — a little basin in the mountains between two streams — I had preached in a new schoolhouse on several occasions."

Jones was a Methodist circuit rider who had received his license to preach on Sept. 3, 1871.

Her book, which Floyd calls a compilation, tells us that Cliff Robinson of Medford told her he remembered the old, one-room log schoolhouse that was on his father's property. There's a photo on page 3 that Robinson describes as being similar to the schoolhouse he remembers.

He recalls the old schoolhouse being torn down in 1910 to make room for a sawmill.

Among the points of interest for this reader were:

Twenty-year-old Joe Burrough was the first of the Grants Pass area soldiers to lose his life in World War I. He was the son of J.B. and Esther Burrough of Jerome Prairie where he had gone to school. He had joined the aviation corps.

The stories written by the students of

different classes about their efforts for helping win World War II were interesting. Some of the authors were Nina Ballinger, Peggy Knowles, Jon Walker, Johnny Brown, Bob Wright, Lucille Poole and Betty Beltz. It's great to have their stories written down.

During the school year of 1917 to 1918, the newest car available in Grants Pass was the Regal Hi Power Four, which went for a whopping \$825. Meanwhile, GoCycles were selling for \$1.25 and were available at Demarays Drug and Stationery Store.

Several fine poems written by teachers also add to the work.

Isabel Jess was the first teacher at Jerome Prairie, serving from 1871 to 1875.

The last pages list the county school superintendents from 1881 to 1981, the Josephine County schools from 1856 to 1977 and offer a valuable resource to researchers or history buffs.

The listings include Jerome Prairie students who'd married each other and the students who'd served their country in the military.

This past month Floyd retired from her job in food services at Selma Elementary School. She was working at Jerome Prairie School when she had the brainstorm to do this book.

She gives credit to many people, school records, school papers and the Daily Courier — all places where she found information for the book.

She also thanks her husband Milford for his support and patience. After 25 years with Timpely Co., he will retire soon, too.

They plan to tour the country.

This book — a fun read and an excellent resource — is available at the society's book shop in the Schmidt House for \$16.95.

"A county school teacher must be able to build fires, adjust fallen pipes, put in window panes, sweep, dust, split kindling, drive a horse, keep out of the neighborhood quarrels, know how and when to whip a bad boy, understand the school laws, raise money for libraries, keep all records, plant trees on Arbor Day, be of good moral character and pass examinations in all branches of education. For these accomplishments she receives \$30 per month."

**-excerpt from
"Jerome Prairie School"
by Connie I. Floyd**

Society news

Door shuts on Barn Again

By Rose Scott

The excitement surrounding the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibition is over now that it has been packed up and sent to the Lincoln County Historical Society.

What remains here are the memories of the way this exhibit turned into a community project where people came together with generous support, cooperative spirit and enthusiastic participation to help "raise" the exhibit in the barn.

The exhibit is being coordinated in Oregon by the Oregon Council for the Humanities and its Oregon scholar, Philip Dole, professor emeritus at the University of Oregon.

"The involvements of the community with the museum and the museum with the community were marvelous," Dole said of the project when he visited for the opening.

Of the more than 1,400 visitors who signed the guest list, most were appreciative of the experience. Many were reminded of a nostalgic story about "my barn" or "the barn where I grew up." Judging from all the favorable comments and the number of sign-ins, the exhibit was a huge success.

And we take pride in having presented it.



Rose Scott gets help from Commissioner Harold Haugen and Mayor Gordon Anderson to open the barn doors.

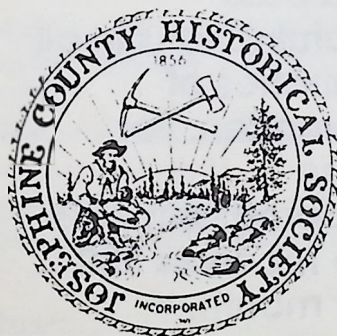
The monies generated by the exhibit admission fee, events, art raffle drawings and donations will help to move the research library into the new building. We are grateful to all of the exhibit's visitors, contributors and participants for this help.

We extend a special thanks to Lucille Fisher and the other volunteers who manned the exhibit and to Charlie Mitchell, interim director of the Grants Pass Visitor's and Convention Bureau.

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